

Wow 851

Chapter 851 Dismantling!_2

That is... a terrifying wave emanating from Spiritual Energy!

Countless players clinging tightly to the fixed facilities within the cabin stared dumbfoundedly at the transparent screen in front of them. This barrier, seemingly non-existent in substance, connected the two halves of the heavily fractured ship and sealed the cabin's leaking passageways.

And the master of this unfathomable Spiritual Energy stood in the heart of the main control hall.

Seeing the players scattered outside the ship, floating aimlessly, Bai E softly commanded, "Kuang Xin, take some men and bring them back."

"Yes!"

As the response rang out, more than a dozen Storm Armors equipped with autonomous propulsion systems shot out from the starship's launch pods. After rescuing the players freely drifting in space one by one, the previously fragmented starship, under the influence of an immense force, began to slowly mend itself.

"Screee~ Screee~"

Amid the teeth-grinding noises, the starship's hull once again sealed itself tightly.

However, this was merely a façade. A ship that had once completely fractured could no longer recover its original self-repair capabilities.

Moreover, the space curvature in the current area had yet to return to its previous standards. The adaptive repair system could counteract some level of structural tears, but the current extent of damage had exceeded the limits of the hull's adaptive materials.

Bai E may not be able to retract these surging Spiritual Energies for quite a long time.

"Deploy personnel to repair the fractured area, and continue the return course at maximum speed!"

Having already reached the fourth level of Spiritual Energy during this long journey, Bai E could accomplish many unbelievable feats in the eyes of ordinary people. However, as his Spiritual Energy level increased, the virtual world's ability to supplement his energy reserves no longer offered endless confidence as it once did.

Facing his current fourth-level cap of 30,000-plus Spiritual Energy points, the virtual world's supplements had begun to show signs of inadequacy—such as a replenishment speed that couldn't match his maximum consumption rate; or the fact that he could no longer fully recharge dozens or hundreds of times like he could at the second level.

Thankfully, the self-recovery speed after achieving fourth-level Spiritual Energy was impressive. Coupled with the virtual world's supplements, Bai E was confident he could sustain this level of output and safely bring the entire starship back to the original planet.

"Understood, Captain!" The native crew chief responded solemnly.

The abrupt and catastrophic transformation of the starship was a completely unforeseen calamity.

If not for the "Demon's Child" called Xu Ruoguang, who had been shoehorned into the crew for unknown reasons as a warning, humanity's first space exploration starship might have encountered an even more horrifying disaster.

In that case, the crew chief would've been the greatest sinner of humanity!

Just thinking about this made the cold sweat drip down his back, filling his heart with lingering dread.

...

The starship's retreat couldn't escape the keen-eyed players onboard, and the realization sparked an explosion of chatter among them.

"What the hell? Why are we retreating?"

"We weren't far from the target point, right? Now how long will this retreat take?"

"I'm so sick of the stuff on this ship. If it weren't for being able to visit the higher-dimensional space to mess with demons, I wouldn't even know how to spend my days..."

"Come on, boss?"

After initially stabilizing the situation, the crew chief stepped forward to explain to these "Demons' Children": "Everyone, hold your horses. Due to certain technical errors, the starship must return to the planet for some adjustments."

"We're really going back? Why not charge forward and give it a shot? Anyway, it doesn't seem that far..."

"Why not give us some of those small escape pods, so we can go explore for ourselves?"

Seeing the natives acting so serious, they inferred that there must be an even bigger and more exciting storyline awaiting in the depths of the universe. Now that they had made it so far into space, how was there any logic in turning back?

Hearing the players' pleas, Bai E's eyes flickered. He couldn't help but feel a temptation rising within himself.

That's right; the players weren't afraid of death. If they wanted to use their lives to uncover new worlds, was it even possible to deny them?

Besides, with the technology of the artificial body production pods now in his hands, most players had already prepared backups of their bodies. Even if they died, they wouldn't have to endure the three-day "character reroll" waiting period anymore—they could instantly respawn.

Though their strength would reset to the basic level of their custom artificial bodies' initial condition, akin to saving progress at high costs, it was still a significant improvement compared to before.

Some players stored their backup bodies on the original planet, while others kept theirs onboard the starship.

Now their main bodies wanted to wander the stars. If they were lucky, perhaps they could bring back some valuable information.

But the risks involved needed to be clearly explained to these players.

Thus, Bai E replaced the crew chief and spoke through the shipwide broadcast: "Humanity is meant to explore the unknown—it's our inherent nature. But due to fatal flaws in the starship's design, proceeding forward would inevitably lead to a complete disintegration. The same applies to the smaller escape pods. Their delicate structure might endure for longer, but that doesn't mean they are safe. If faced with the same circumstances, these escape pods would also be at risk of disintegration. If you understand these risks and still wish to pilot those escape pods and continue the journey... then go ahead."

Disintegration?

Death?

Do these words pose any real threat to players?

Not to mention, many players had already tested their own limits. Except for a few unlucky souls who crashed into sharp objects and succumbed to the vacuum of space, most managed to endure brief exposure to the cosmos thanks to their enhanced physical resilience.

As long as the small escape pods didn't completely disintegrate—or they didn't die before encountering a chance that could trigger a new storyline—wasn't it worth trying?

Sure, this sounded unreliable and abstract.

In the boundless expanse of the universe, relying on escape pods or physical bodies to find something fresh would be like searching for a needle in a haystack.

But to the players? Who cares?

"What if it works?"

"What's the harm in trying?"

"At worst, you die!"

Similar thoughts rang incessantly in the minds of many players.

Thus, half of the escape pods carried by the starship were deployed, replacing the starship itself, heading toward its originally planned destination.

Inside each small pod, which could hold dozens of people, every player excitedly equipped their jet-powered backpacks. These were their final options for active mobility in space after their pods disintegrated.

If they didn't find any opportunities before the backpacks ran out of fuel, they'd be completely out of luck.

What seemed like an insane gamble with microscopic odds still attracted plenty of willing participants. Through the transparent portholes, players waved goodbye to each other as their pods drifted further and further away...

...until they exploded into bursts of fireworks one after another.

The starship began its journey home, bidding farewell to the adventuring players.

Some of those who had just said their goodbyes moments earlier awakened in the artificial body production pods. Their faces were filled with regret. "I shouldn't have left!"

"Damn it! Blew up right after I left!"

"Hahaha, that was so fun!"

"Did everyone explode?"

"Not everyone..." Some players glanced at the backup body chambers, where the quiet, soulless flesh of their former comrades lay sleeping. Envy flickered in their eyes as they muttered, "Some are still flying forward!"

"I'm so jealous of them..."

"Wonder how far they'll go?"

Chapter 852 Cage of Curvature

Under circumstances no one had anticipated, the battle-scarred starship returned to the planet's command center once again.

The massive starship's landing immediately drew the attention of nearly everyone on the planet.

The people who arrived upon hearing the news felt an overwhelming sense of astonishment. "Why did it return so soon?"

According to the plan, even if they found nothing at the destination, the round-trip timeframe would likely require two years.

Yet now, it seems only a year has passed, and this familiar starship has already returned, bearing scars all over its body.

What exactly happened on their journey?

...

During the year-plus they were gone, the planet itself hadn't undergone any major changes.

For the sake of this starship, the entire planet had been living through difficult times, tightening belts to conserve resources.

After the starship departed, the planet experienced no apparent crises; what they needed most was to recuperate and rebuild.

Upon receiving global monitoring alerts about the starship's return, Helen and others rushed to the wide-open plains where the starship landed.

Looking at the vessel, its surface scorched from passing through the atmosphere and areas of damage emitting trails of white steam, Helen gazed curiously at Bai E, who calmly walked out through the opened starship doors. "What happened during your journey?"

Bai E, his face weary, gestured behind him. "They will tell you."

After speaking, he continued walking forward before everything went black and, with a loud "thud," collapsed to the ground.

A dark shadow darted forward instantly, catching his body before he could fully hit the ground.

"What happened to him?" Helen asked worriedly.

In her memory, she had never seen Bai E display this level of exhaustion before.

Could it be that they encountered some formidable enemy on their mission?

Although they managed to hard-fought victory under Bai E's leadership, were they forced to retreat?

Helen's mind instantly filled in the blanks with her own imagined sequence of events.

However, Yue Ying, who had caught Bai E's body, simply shook her head. "He's fine."

She could sense Bai E's current state of mental exhaustion — the telltale signs of Spiritual Energy overuse were far from unfamiliar in her lifetime.

"He's merely burned through too much Spiritual Energy and is temporarily depleted. He'll recover fully with some time to rest."

"Alright." Helen nodded, then turned her attention towards the group walking off the ship following Bai E. Her sharp, alluring gaze quickly locked onto the mission manager among them. "What exactly happened?"

The manager wore a bitter expression. "We neglected a crucial factor... space curvature! After leaving the planet's proximity, the starship disintegrated. It was only thanks to Bai E enveloping the ship with Spiritual Energy all the way that we were able to return safely."

"Space curvature?" Helen furrowed her brows, her sharp mind quickly processing the information.

Zhou Wenjie, who followed behind the manager, eagerly chimed in with an explanation. "Our planet is most likely within the influence range of a massive black hole, which means the space curvature here is vastly different from that of flat, normal spacetime. A starship designed with our local rules cannot function across the universe. To venture outward again, we must redesign our starship!"

For some reason, Wen Jie felt that the scientific knowledge found in game simulations might even surpass that of reality.

But with this problem now before them, how would they solve such a critical dilemma?

For now, their spaceship was bound to operate only within the limited area of influence by the black hole. This world... was truly dark and uninspiring.

Wen Jie's brief explanation instantly made Helen realize the crux of the predicament.

The black hole had warped space.

Within the vast cosmic region defined by a circular ring encompassing the black hole and their planet, the space curvature remained relatively uniform. Their starship, as currently built, could navigate freely within this ring without the risk of catastrophic disintegration.

Yet, closer to the black hole, spatial distortions would intensify.

Conversely, farther from the black hole, space would resemble its normal state again.

The mass of an ordinary planet lacked the capacity to warp space so dramatically as this black hole does.

So, did that mean a realm existing within the black hole's influence could never step out to explore the larger universe beyond?

Could this be the very reason their planet, since the Golden Age and even earlier, had never encountered other intelligent lifeforms?

The universe within the black hole's radius and the universe outside its influence were fundamentally isolated worlds.

Like land versus sea...

Only alien species such as the Bug Race or Orcs, whose resilience bordered on the absurd, could breach the barriers of the universe to arrive on this planet.

Helen narrowed her eyes as her brain worked at lightning speed.

The newly unveiled challenge instantly ignited all of her passionate fervor; confronting challenges had always been the lifelong destiny of scientists like her.

...

"Is he going to be alright?"

Watching the unconscious man lying on the bed who had been in a coma for days, Yue Ying asked worriedly.

During her extensive life experience, she had certainly witnessed other Spiritual Energy users experience depletion before, and indeed, recovery times varied wildly. Some regained consciousness in half a day or a single day, while others remained comatose for ten days, half a month, or even as long as a year.

But... this was Bai E!

From start to finish, he had always seemed invincible, like an unyielding superhuman.

Now, two days had already passed, and he still hadn't awakened?

It was precisely out of such concern that the Blackwater City residents, whose relations with the elves had grown deeply intertwined in the last two years, entrusted Bai E to the care of the Elf Prophet.

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After all, on this planet, apart from the unreasonable existence of Bai E, only the Prophet of the Elf Race is known to have the highest level of Spiritual Energy cultivation.

If Bai E needs any help with Spiritual Energy, perhaps only she would have the ability to provide it.

Feng Ling, who was quietly drawing on the side, shook his head with a smile, "Taking an entire Starship across hundreds of light-years, if such a level of consumption couldn't put him in this state, I'd really start questioning the reality of this world..."

There are four-tier Spiritual Energies among humans and elves, but how can their four-tiers compare to a terrifying monster like Bai E?

Now that he's in such a deep coma, it actually brings some peace of mind.

At least... this guy isn't the true form of a constantly disguised Evil God.

However, Yue Ying remains uneasy. For someone of Bai E's level, would falling into Spiritual Energy depletion be more troublesome than for ordinary people?

In past cases, few Spiritual Energies who fell into depletion have been able to restore their energy, and even if they did, it was difficult to return to their peak level in the short term.

If such a thing were to happen to Bai E...

"Don't worry..." Feeling Bai E's calm breath, Feng Ling shook his head and smiled, "Such a setback is nothing to him."

Just as his Spiritual Energy growth surpassed all historical records, recovery... shouldn't be too difficult for him.

The only thing that needs consideration right now... is whether they can find a way out of this "cage"?

Eyelids gently twitching, breathing slightly heavy.

Both Yue Ying and Feng Ling, among the few strong individuals on this planet, looked simultaneously at the sleeping figure on the bed.

Soft light, filtering through the slit of the eyes, entered the vision.

A faint fragrance, lingering above the nose bridge.

Bai E opened his eyes and saw two picturesque faces.

"Awake?" Feng Ling smiled gently.

"Mm." Bai E slowly sat up, thoughts returning to before his coma.

Realizing he had successfully brought the Starship back to the planet and completed the transfer in front of Helen, he silently breathed a sigh of relief.

"I've heard about it, your mission this time didn't seem to go so smoothly..." Feng Ling smiled lightly, as if he never worried about these apparent difficulties.

"Mm." Bai E chuckled bitterly, lowering his head, "The technology isn't enough... I don't know if Helen can solve it."

If we had to rely on the planet's technological advancements to slowly overcome this issue, who knows how long it would take?

Or simply fly solo in the universe with a Mecha... but at his speed, how many years would it take to cover the distance a curvature ship flew?

"It's doable~" Feng Ling smiled gently at Bai E, "With what you've accumulated now, there's a way to solve this problem."

'So certain?'

Bai E's eyes lit up.

The Elf Race's Prophet wouldn't speak without basis, nor would she need to say such things to comfort him.

Immediately, his face showed joy, and he asked excitedly, "Really a way?"

"I don't know~" Feng Ling smiled mysteriously, "I can only see a vague 'answer', but I can't see the detailed process. The specific method requires you all to find it yourselves."

"..." Bai E was stunned, instantly jumping up and rushing outside.

Yue Ying hurried to follow, "You just woke up, don't you want to rest?"

"No mood for it."

Taking the first step into the universe and facing setbacks without finding a solution, Bai E couldn't sleep peacefully.

Quickly finding Helen, Bai E immediately asked, "Any solutions yet?"

Having not slept for two days and nights, Helen's delicate face also looked somewhat pale and haggard. Facing Bai E's inquiry, Helen shook her head with a bitter smile, "Can't find it."

Can't find it at all.

"According to your experience this time, adaptive repair metals can indeed counteract the tearing effects on Starships caused by changes in rules to some extent. But the thirty-two-element alloy used on Starships is already our most advanced alloy material, and even it can't help you completely exit the black hole's influence range. With our current level... there's no hope in the short term to break out of this cage."

"Isn't there some compromise? For example, could our Starship be designed with a median value between a normal curvature environment and the curvature here as its core? That might allow our Starship to operate in an extreme state and navigate through flat space?"

"Too idealistic..." Helen shook her head, "A slight error can lead to a thousand miles' mistake. In the field of astronomy, even a 1% discrepancy at the start can lead to an irreparable gulf. At our current location, it's impossible to produce a Starship with so-called median curvature. Not to mention, even if it were made, who knows if there might be larger space distortions where you're headed next? When the Starship disintegrates again, how will you come back?"

Distance is the coldest judgment the universe holds over intelligent life.

They managed to solve the issues of lifespan and speed, yet different curvatures in different areas of the universe locked them in cages.

"Is there really no feasible way?" Bai E asked, unwilling to give up.

The Prophet of the Elf Race had mentioned that with their current technology, there was surely a solution, and it wouldn't have been said to fool them out of thin air.

"There are methods, but not ones you would want." Helen hung her head, equally despondent, "I call it the 'Stepping Stone Plan.' We can use our current maximum travel distance as a limit to find habitable planets within range. Then we can locally gather resources to manufacture a second-generation Starship with the planet's local curvature. Within the second-generation Starship's maximum range, we continue looking for and utilizing habitable planets to make a third-generation Starship. By dividing the entire universe into Stellar Districts based on spatial curvature, humanity's footprint could eventually reach every corner of the universe. However, this time..."

It's only a grand expedition for humanity's future generations, not a short-term solution they can see in their lifetime.

"..." Bai E pursed his lips, somewhat doubtful if the vague 'result' the Elf Prophet foresaw was indeed such a long-term plan.

Given the vague nature of their Elf Race prophecies, such a possibility wasn't out of the question.

If so, what does it have to do with him?

Surely the universe isn't so dark and cold, that they would be confined to a "ring" within it?

"No! I don't believe it. There must be another way!"

Bai E stared, unwilling to concede.

"Crossing space shouldn't be this difficult."

After all, in the promotional articles or images he had seen for games, stepping into the universe was when players truly started the game.

The name "Galaxy Online" shouldn't just be an empty promise.

"Space..."

"Space..."

Space shouldn't be something sacred and insurmountable.

At a lightning-fast moment, a bright image suddenly burst into Bai E's pitch-black mind—

A dim and warped purple space, exuding a mysterious and dangerous aura.

Higher-dimensional space!

"Higher-dimensional space!" Bai E suddenly spoke.

"What?" Helen was taken aback, clearly unaware of Bai E's intention.

"Higher-dimensional space!" Bai E's eyes sparkled, "Remember how their Elf Race delegation came to our Blackwater City?"

Chapter 854 Possibility of High-Dimensional Navigation

High-dimensional space allows the transcender to traverse spatial limitations in a short amount of time and reach any corner of the world.

This was precisely the ability the Elf Race used when they first arrived in Blackwater City.

The same capability within the realm of Spiritual Energy—if the Elves can achieve it, why can't humans?

Helen was initially perplexed, but as her thoughts expanded, her eyes lit up more and more, "What you're saying does have a certain possibility!"

The restrictions of space are not absolute when it comes to high-dimensional space.

Theoretically speaking, traveling to a location in real space is akin to moving from one point to another on the surface of an unrolled sheet of paper—the distance on the flattened plane is an unignorable vast gap.

Yet for high-dimensional space, this unrolled piece of paper can be bent at will.

By folding the paper, two points originally distant on the planar surface become adjacent to each other.

Crossing the "rift" in high-dimensional space allows easy passage from one point in real space to another.

This has been the research conclusion humans have reached regarding high-dimensional space, and in fact, the Elves have conducted similar experiments.

If this concept could be applied to massive starships, they might truly possess a method of traversing vast distances via high-dimensional space.

"But even if this concept succeeds, we would only be solving the problem of time. The effects of spatial curvature... remain deadly. If our starships can't adapt to any curvature, then in the instant they return to real-world space, disintegration is inevitable."

"A brief tear—I might be able to endure it," Bai E frowned as he proposed his idea.

Returning an entire starship from light-years away, the prolonged journey had left his Spiritual Energy in a state of stretched depletion.

Yet if one only made brief transitions between high-dimensional space and real-world space, his current level of Spiritual Energy might be enough to preserve the ship's structure.

"This... could work," Helen pondered, stroking her chin. "But the prerequisite is that we must master a stable method of high-dimensional traversal. At present, human research in this field is far from sufficient for such extensive exploration."

"Someone does have it!"

Upon this thought, Bai E turned back and returned to the Elf Race's quarters, where he approached Wind Spirit, who did not seem even slightly surprised, and said, "Perhaps we can change the way we navigate!"

"Such as?" Wind Spirit's gaze carried a faint amusement as she asked calmly.

"High-dimensional space!"

"You want to use our method of high-dimensional travel?"

"Yes," Bai E stated bluntly, "This is the only short-term solution we can think of."

Wind Spirit considered briefly, "I'm not sure if this truly answers the question of how you humans will leave your planet. If you genuinely wish to learn, I won't hold back. However, I need to clarify one thing in advance."

"Please go ahead."

"You already understand what high-dimensional space entails—traversing it is fraught with incredible risks. Moreover, based on our current understanding, to enter high-dimensional space, the primary entity traversing must possess spirituality..."

Spirituality implies intelligence.

When a person wields a blade, the person is the primary entity, possessing Spiritual Energy, and thus capable of entering high-dimensional space.

When a ship carries people, the ship becomes the primary entity. Without spirituality, the ship cannot enter high-dimensional space.

Either the entire crewed starship is outright rejected from entering, or the humans enter but the starship remains outside.

Both outcomes are unacceptable for humanity.

"If it's a small-scale personnel team traversing, my own capabilities can achieve that. But if you aim to conduct space exploration on a scale comparable to your recent interstellar mission, relying on human effort alone to accomplish this process would be nearly impossible. No single person can imbue a massive starship with the necessary definition of spirituality."

Though Bai E could use his Spiritual Energy to protect the starship's integrity during its return from ripping through dimensions, that didn't mean he could use his abilities to disguise the starship's "true nature" in the face of high-dimensional space.

Thus, to facilitate large-scale exploration voyages, the issue of the starship's "spirituality" must first be resolved.

"..." Bai E furrowed his brow slightly, "Spirituality."

Spirituality is a concept that feels enigmatic.

But in this maddening world, it isn't that abstract of a notion.

For example, what if we could make the starship give birth to a Warship Girl Machine Spirit?

That might satisfy the definition of "spirituality."

But such things are rare miracles—his own mecha has always been merely a Pseudo Machine Spirit.

He could feel his mecha's heated response to his control, but it still fell far short of the "Machine Spirit" they spoke of.

If even the mecha he had spent the longest time with couldn't manifest a Machine Spirit, how could he rapidly create such an esoteric phenomenon for an entire starship?

"Perhaps..." Following closely behind Bai E, Helen suddenly spoke from the side, her eyes wide and glazed, "We might already have what we need."

Bai E raised his eyebrow slightly, "Have what?"

"Spirituality!" Helen gazed intently at Bai E, her eyes burning bright. "Remember those bio-engineered minds developed by the old synthetic-veterans?"

"Those bio-engineered veterans?" Bai E paused in surprise, dredging up memories of those terrifying creations capable of obliterating him instantly, "You mean their biological core brain system?"

"Yes! That core brain system could completely serve as the central processing unit for a starship."
Helen's eyes gleamed, "If we replaced the current electronic controls of the starship with that biological core brain system, theoretically, the starship might genuinely be perceived as possessing 'spirituality'! And that biological core brain system is still stored safely in the warehouse... we can definitely try this!"

Chapter 855 Possibility of High-Dimensional Navigation_2

On the side, Feng Ling, who indeed had the corresponding technical reserves, curiously widened her bright eyes, silently pondering, 'Do they really have the necessary technological reserves to solve this problem? If so, perhaps this might actually be a way out.'

After all, prophecy is fickle, sometimes accurate, sometimes not.

What you see isn't always useful.

Those fragmented prophetic images are undoubtedly true, but their dimensions of time and space cannot be guaranteed.

The more detailed the description of an event's purpose, the blurrier it becomes across the dimensions of time and space.

Conversely, if the constraints of time and space are tightly locked, the direction and type of prophecy may veer completely off course.

To know the fate of humanity in its exploration of the universe, she could only "see" the perspective from a spaceship's porthole arriving before an interstellar harbor filled with structures.

As for whether it is the present or centuries or millennia into the future, there's no telling.

Whether this interstellar harbor even lies at the targeted waypoint of this exploration team, that too remains uncertain.

And whether this interstellar harbor is even built by humans themselves... that is even harder to say.

When all these uncertainties pile up, the more one can foresee the future, the more they feel lost about it.

She had no idea how humanity on the ground would truly act when it came to it.

Meeting Bai E's inquisitive gaze, Feng Ling collected her wandering thoughts and nodded slightly, "You can give it a try. It might just be a feasible direction. But even if this problem is solved, you'll still have to face another issue—the beacon's guidance..."

Back when their Elf Envoy Group managed to arrive at Blackwater City, they relied not only on Feng Ling's powerful Spiritual Energy abilities but, more importantly, on Yue Ying, stationed inside Blackwater City, serving as a beacon to provide high-dimensional space guidance.

To navigate in that dark and eerie realm, the existence of a Spiritual Energy beacon is indispensable.

Ancient sailors in the medieval age needed lighthouses for guidance, and traveling through high-dimensional space now similarly requires these beacons as markers.

Otherwise, the consequences would be unbearable.

"The mapping relationship between high-dimensional space and the real world isn't stable—it's complex and ever-changing. If we, standing side by side in one part of high-dimensional space, were to separate and act individually, it's entirely possible for you to traverse the dimensional barrier back to the real world in one moment and land in a city on our planet, while in the next moment, I might emerge at the stellar core of a star. If Mr. Bai doesn't want your starship to materialize inside some star or even the center of a black hole as soon as it appears, then a precisely positioned Spiritual Energy beacon is absolutely essential! Otherwise, we'd be left entirely at the mercy of luck..."

'A beacon is needed?'

'Which also means someone has to first travel to the destination ahead of time?'

Bai E frowned to himself.

Could it be that he'd still have to act alone?

The curvature constraints were a critical limitation—the starship was too large for him to carry it across such vast physical distances all by himself.

But if it was something like the small escape pods used by those individual players during their return, his Spiritual Energy would easily protect it as it roamed freely through the Star Sea.

This was, in fact, the worst-case scenario he had initially prepared himself for.

At the start, he had been reluctant to go this route because space was simply too vast, and even if he made it through on his own, what could he accomplish there?

From the game expansion packs he'd come to know in the past, as well as observations of outer space from Blackwater City—including the imperial capital—it was almost certain that other intelligent life forms existed in this universe.

Arriving alone, penniless, and empty-handed, even if he encountered these intelligent life forms, what could he achieve?

Rely on his fourth-tier Spiritual Energy level or the peak of 60 points in all attributes? Or perhaps his fully maxed-out level 10 mastery or the entirely unlocked skill tree?

On a cosmic scale, Bai E had never been confident enough in his personal combat prowess.

To strengthen the planet's power and truly resist the Bug Race's threat, it was indispensable to rely on numerous personnel to trade with alien intelligent beings and enhance their strength.

That was also why he had insisted on bringing an entire team previously.

Now, while the reasoning remained the same, the objective was entirely different.

All he needed to do was pilot a small spacecraft equipped with a Curvature Navigation Engine to reach the destination first, using himself as the beacon to guide the team aboard the starship through high-dimensional space to his current location.

Plan: Achieved!

Bai E nodded in satisfaction, realizing this was the most executable approach under all current conditions.

"Then I'll leave the matter of changing the central brain to you." Having finalized his plan, Bai E turned to Helen. "Once confirmed feasible, we can begin executing the entire plan!"

"No problem!" Helen quickly agreed.

Next, Bai E turned to look at Feng Ling. "In that case, the secret of high-dimensional space travel will rely on your guidance."

"Not an issue." Feng Ling flashed a dashing smile. "I'm equally thrilled to be part of something like this!"

...

To provide Bai E with a sufficiently quiet and focused learning environment, Yue Ying and Helen took their leave, leaving only Feng Ling and Bai E alone in the room.

"Before I formally start teaching you the method of high-dimensional space teleportation, I need to clarify something—

High-dimensional space teleportation isn't necessarily all that difficult. What it requires most of all is... knowledge and computational ability.

Yue Ying's level of Spiritual Energy attainment isn't much inferior to mine, but the reason she can never master high-dimensional space teleportation lies in this very point.

So, if you encounter any difficulties or sticking points during your studies, that is entirely normal. You needn't feel disheartened or blame yourself."

Bai E solemnly nodded. "Of course, I understand."

The Prophet of the Elf Race before him spoke with utmost seriousness, though Bai E had no idea if his tens of thousands of accumulated experience reserves could see him through.

If indeed some problem arose that transcended experience, he could only sigh helplessly.

Of course, this wouldn't affect the plan itself too much.

After all, in the current plan, his role was merely to act as a beacon, arriving at the destination early to establish a fixed point.

The one who would eventually lead the starship through high-dimensional space could only be Feng Ling—it was inevitable.

"Alright." Bai E's steady humility earned Feng Ling's approving nod. "Now, let's talk about the mysteries of high-dimensional space teleportation... So-called high-dimensional space teleportation is essentially an enhanced version of High-Dimensional Walking. While High-Dimensional Walking allows a Spiritual Energy practitioner to briefly guide their body through high-dimensional space, high-dimensional space teleportation requires a singular will to bring a group of 'spiritual entities' through high-dimensional space all at once. Its core lies in being 'singular' and remaining 'whole.'

[You are learning "Spiritual Energy Technique—High-Dimensional Space Teleportation" ...]

[Prerequisites for learning this Spiritual Energy Technique detected; evaluating requirements now...]

[Your accumulated knowledge level exceeds 100, requirement met.]

[Your accumulated technology level exceeds 100, requirement met.]

[Evaluation complete. You are eligible to learn the technique.]

"..." Bai E slightly pursed his lips, surprised that the prerequisites for learning this ability turned out to be these.

In the past few years, after harvesting tens of thousands of players' experience points and maxing out his combat skill tree to almost its limits, he had spent the rest of his time assisting Helen or the scientists with various engineering tasks as a precautionary measure.

Unexpectedly, this had now become the key to him learning the ability...

Chapter 856 Are there really aliens?

"In the past, our method of entering high-dimensional space mostly involved descending our consciousness into a spiritual body. Upon returning, wherever the physical body remained, the consciousness would return there, devoid of any significance related to material world traversal. If we intend to traverse the material world via high-dimensional space, we must directly enter with our physical body. This approach is completely different from previous methods and entails far greater risks. Be cautious!"

[You are listening to the Master's Spiritual Energy insights, feeling a spark of comprehension...]

[Instruction: Sensing the profound Spiritual Energy mastery of the other party, you resolve to pay a certain price (Universal Experience) to accelerate your learning of the corresponding abilities.]

[You are spending Universal Experience to enhance your understanding of Spiritual Energy...]

[You are learning "Spiritual Energy Skill—High-dimensional Space Teleportation," current progress 1%...]

Bai E nodded solemnly to show his understanding, "Understood."

"After absorbing these prerequisite details, we can formally begin attempting to learn High-dimensional Space Teleportation... As I've mentioned before, achieving High-dimensional Space Teleportation primarily requires a sufficient reserve of knowledge and computational abilities. By knowledge reserve, I mean our self-comprehension of this world..."

[You are learning "Spiritual Energy Skill—High-dimensional Space Teleportation," current progress 50%...]

Bai E could sense that all the prior knowledge he had accumulated—science and technology alike—was woven into tangible nutrients through Feng Ling's teachings, transforming into genuine understanding of high-dimensional space and the material world.

High-dimensional space and the material world are, in essence, dual aspects of a unified reality. High-dimensional space is a projection of the material world, and only together do they reveal the true face of existence.

Knowledge, technology, and the like are essentially humanity's distilled efforts to encapsulate and grasp the fundamental nature of the world, crystallizing the wisdom of humankind.

To adeptly traverse between high-dimensional space and the material world, what is most essential is a deep comprehension of the world's inherent laws.

"Simultaneously, we must rely on feedback obtained from all our acquired knowledge within high-dimensional space. Using this feedback in an 'intuitive' manner, we can open the gateway to high-dimensional space, stabilize the channel for high-dimensional navigation, and discover methods for exiting high-dimensional space along with the subsequent consequences. This so-called intuition, in truth, stems from our computational capabilities..."

[You are learning "Spiritual Energy Skill—High-dimensional Space Teleportation," current progress 75%...]

[You are learning "Spiritual Energy Skill—High-dimensional Space Teleportation," current progress 100%...]

[You have successfully acquired "Spiritual Energy Skill—High-dimensional Space Teleportation." From now on, you may attempt to bring a limited number of others through high-dimensional space to traverse unknown distances in the material world.]

Seeing the increasingly "vacant" look in Bai E's eyes, Feng Ling thoughtfully reminded him, "If you're finding it overwhelming, we can take a bit of a pause. Although strong Spiritual Energy mastery is only the baseline requirement for learning this technique, not every Spiritual Energy practitioner who reaches Level Four can master it. Even among those in our tribe, very few can perform this teleportation skill. By familiarizing yourself with and practicing the technique over time, you can potentially support its reinforcement."

Bai E shook his head, as though snapping back to reality.

His eyes, awakening from their vacant state, regarded Feng Ling with renewed brightness. "I think...I want to try."

Having just spent a mere twenty thousand Universal Experience to learn the ability, Bai E wanted to test whether the skill he painstakingly acquired truly worked as intended.

Feng Ling looked at Bai E with an odd expression, "You want to try?"

Faint rumors heard from his younger sister Yue Ying suddenly surged into Feng Ling's mind, though she remained somewhat incredulous.

In the past, Yue Ying had told her that the learning aptitude of this Mr. Bai was extraordinary, but that was in the domains her younger sister excelled at!

Those rough-and-tumble combat skills—she admittedly found them rather "crude."

That a human equally proficient in battle had quickly mastered those techniques seemed less extraordinary.

But when it came to "High-dimensional Space Teleportation," a domain she specialized in, Feng Ling realized the terrifying talent hidden behind Bai E's ability to learn.

'Could he really have...mastered it?'

Her gaze sharpened with curiosity and, as if issuing a challenge, she smiled provocatively, "Then let's see."

She mobilized her Spiritual Energy and established a certain connection with Bai E on a Spiritual Energy frequency. "In a moment, I will first return to the tribe's territory and project a beacon for you. If you can teleport directly to me, it will signify that you've achieved the rudimentary teleportation ability. Beyond this, carrying greater quantities of objects or individuals in teleportation would mean continuously enhancing your command of this skill and the level of your Spiritual Energy mastery, which would be beyond what I am capable of teaching."

"Understood."

Bai E nodded calmly, his face serious as he waited for Feng Ling's next move.

As Feng Ling's Spiritual Energy unfolded with an inexplicable aura, ripples of space shimmered behind her, resembling the gentle undulations of water, enveloped in an almost surreal texture.

Feng Ling smiled lightly at Bai E, gracefully stepping backward.

With a single retreating motion, her figure vanished from the spot.

Moments later, a flashing beacon appeared within Bai E's consciousness, blinking rhythmically.

Immediately, Bai E began channeling his Spiritual Energy.

The barrier between the material world and high-dimensional space was effortlessly breached with minimal output, and the same water ripple-like texture enveloped Bai E's vision.

Chapter 857 Are there really aliens?_2

The turbulent space was full of mysterious allure, while also radiating a wild and chaotic energy.

Bai E took a step forward, and once again saw that magnificent world filled with countless purple zigzag patterns...

...

Within the players' realm, a piece of news quietly leaked and spread like wildfire across every channel of information.

"Holy crap! There really are aliens in this world!"

"Why do these aliens look just like humans on our planet?"

"Man, that alien girl is freaking gorgeous! I want to go to space and pick up alien chicks too!"

"Don't go, you'll end up mining. Our great artist already got sent to the bottom of the ocean."

"I'm the loyal dog of the Pirate Queen! Bow down to her!"

The buzz started with a player using the ID "Artist" who shared their journeys and discoveries after joining humanity's Star Sea Fleet on a forum.

There might be names completely dissimilar to the person in question, but their nicknames and IDs were unmistakable.

As the name suggests, "Artist" was, without a doubt, a master of painting.

Everything witnessed in the game could be effortlessly replicated onto the real-world forums through their artistry.

The initial leg of "Artist"'s journey was rather mundane, to the point where followers almost lost interest in updates.

However, when the Starship heading out to explore the cosmos encountered an unknown disaster leading to disintegration, plans to return home were made. During this time, "Artist" and several other players proposed piloting small escape pods for alien exploration, a suggestion that received approval from the Starship's lord, Bai E.

From that moment on, "Artist"'s journey could only be described as a blaze of glory.

The large Starship disintegrated, so how safe could the smaller escape pods really be?

Yet, "Artist," who hadn't respawned back into their pre-selected artificial body, managed to survive—but not due to the quality of the escape pod.

Not long after leaving the main fleet, "Artist"'s escape pod, along with others, exploded.

Blown far away by the blast wave, "Artist" didn't forget to look back and document this unprecedented moment while drifting freely in space.

Compared to other players who gradually lost their lives due to the hostile cosmic conditions, "Artist" was slightly luckier.

Before truly meeting their end, they encountered an alien spaceship.

Together with a few other fortunate players, "Artist" was rescued by the aliens aboard the ship.

Strangely, the aliens on this spaceship bore an uncanny resemblance to humans on the planet. Moreover, their attitude toward these stranded players was exceptionally friendly.

With the assistance of these amicable aliens, the rescued players learned an earth-shattering truth: Humanity in the universe far outnumbers those confined to the planet's small domain.

Humankind's footprint spans the galaxy, with all visible territories dominated by humans.

Although these humans are divided into various nations under different titles, humanity as a whole reigns supreme as the galactic overlords!

A macro-level peace exists, with localized competition.

This was the fragment of the interstellar landscape revealed to the players.

The spaceship rescuing the players was actually a merchant vessel traveling from one nation to another for trade.

The reason this ship saved the players was the impressive resilience displayed as their physical forms wandered in space. They were invited to serve temporarily as guards for the merchant vessel—pirates had recently been troubling its route.

This rumor immediately drew the laughter of a stunningly gorgeous and seductive woman aboard the ship.

Soon, this captivating woman became the target of many heated gazes.

It must be said that the ship's intelligence division was exceptionally adept in gathering accurate information.

The spaceship indeed encountered pirates.

And the pirate leader turned out to be none other than that strikingly beautiful and seductive woman.

Though the players fought hard to repay the ship for saving them, their efforts proved futile against overwhelming odds. Enhancements and combat prowess that allowed them to dominate planets were reduced to mere elite combat units in small-scale cosmic battles.

The new interstellar chapter of the players' lives had barely begun before it took a drastic turn—transforming them into the personal property of the Pirate Queen...

Thrown into the ocean to work as miners.

On a planet with horrifying underwater pressures, they extracted an extremely viscous and durable seabed clay—a fitting fate for individuals with resilient constitutions.

The experiences of "Artist" and a few other fortunate players might not evoke envy, but the worlds they unveiled resembled a deep-sea bomb detonating in the player community.

Aliens truly existed in the universe!

While the contents of the planet had yet to be fully explored, humanity's civilization in the distant cosmos seemed far more dazzling and diverse.

"Artist" and other abducted players captured by pirates were far from the only lucky ones.

Given "Artist"'s consistent live-streams showcasing their artistic prowess, they had gained considerable attention and credibility.

Some other fortunate players also shared their experiences, but their accounts were typically dismissed as mere fabrications.

It was only after "Artist"'s story proved the existence of numerous human civilizations in the universe that these overlooked accounts were unearthed by players, one after another—

"Thanks for the invite, currently in Freeport, just got off the ship. Freeport's vibe is seriously chill. As soon as I stepped off the ship, a girl pulled me away. I'll update after I find out more details..."

"Turned out she wanted my kidneys! She saw I didn't have any to take, so just left me for dead! Damn it!"

...

"Got rescued by a small exploration team. Everyone in the group is super nice. They're heading to a floating pyramid abandoned in space..."

"Damn! The pyramid's loaded with traps!"

"Hehe~ One flash of green light and I was toast! Space is awesome. Can't wait to go again next time."

...

"Holy crap, you guys will never believe what I just saw! A city floating in outer space!"

"They said it used to be the moon of a planet. After the planet got blown up, they started flying the moon around as a roaming base."

"Wait, what the hell? Turns out they're calling this place Freeport too? A girl's already approached me, gotta go now hehe~"

"Got murked again..."

...

The varied and vibrant space exploration tales of those lucky players instantly ignited unparalleled enthusiasm across the entire player community.

"Holy smokes, there's no way we're not going now!"

"When's the alliance organizing the next galactic expedition? This time, take me along! I'll do anything for a spot!"

"Don't go. Didn't you see how many people went and how few actually made contact with alien societies? Most of them didn't survive."

"I'm the chosen one—those other losers can't compare to me, right?"

"The alliance is probably broke. I suggest everyone pitch in and fund a new Starship for the cause!"

"One Starship? Is that all? Who are you underestimating? One per person! One per person!"

"With your current skills, you'd just end up as slave labor when you land! You haven't even mastered the planet's gameplay, yet you're dreaming about roaming the galaxy? Unless you've got some bigwig backing you up, any expedition's doomed. I suggest you catch up to Bai E's level before venturing into space."

"So when's Bai E heading back into the cosmos? Any insiders willing to spill the tea? Waiting online for answers—urgent, urgent, urgent!"

Among the players, Kuang Xin and a few companions couldn't ignore the overwhelming buzz.

The group exchanged silent glances among themselves.

"Is the universe really this lively?"

"So many people are talking about it—it can't all be fake. Plus, based on what I've gathered, they didn't even use their prepped artificial bodies. Adds a bit of credibility."

Chapter 858 Test Flight

"Are we really going this time?" Gu Lan's eyes widened, full of interest.

"But the last exploration failed. Wen Jie said that our current technology has a fatal flaw that can't be overcome. Can the leader still go again under such circumstances?"

"That was under the assumption that there might not be aliens outside. But this time, it's confirmed! Even if we have to sell everything, we must go!"

When they heard that there were other people on a different planet in this game, the happiest ones were these players.

Especially Gong Yan and Kuang Xin, who carried the same secret in their hearts, exchanged a cautious glance.

In fact, the many characteristics displayed by this game made them increasingly believe that it was a real world.

Especially after activating the "Real Game" option, and gaining extraordinary abilities in reality that they previously only had in the game, they became even more certain of this.

It was possible that their real world was somewhere in a corner of this universe.

The so-called game might be some sort of spatial gateway; the game world and the real world could actually just be two planets in the same universe.

In the game, they must venture out!

It might allow their leader to find the planet they were on and protect them as well.

Relying solely on their own power in the real world, it was difficult to grow strong enough to face high-dimensional demons alone.

In the game world, they had been dealing with these situations for a long, long time and had developed a more mature system of resistance.

"We have to go! Absolutely!" Kuang Xin's face lit up with excitement. "We should go find the boss; he'll definitely believe us."

The NPCs in this game world had unexpectedly responsive reactions to their words. Even if they took no relevant physical actions in the game, any words they spoke would elicit feedback from the NPCs.

It was as if those NPCs understood that the players could connect on another level.

As for whether that feedback was positive or negative, it depended on the individual relationships between the players and the NPCs.

With sufficient favorability, the things they said were generally accepted by the NPCs.

For example, they had never been untruthful in front of the leader.

"As long as it's confirmed that there are indeed aliens outside, the leader and the others will likely commence a second interstellar voyage very soon. There's no time to waste—we need to find the leader now!" Dai Lian, the decision-maker of the group, voiced his final opinion, his eyes also brimming with excitement.

...

"The experiment was essentially successful." Helen's face radiated contentment.

The experiment involving replacing the Starship's central control system with a biological main brain was proceeding remarkably smooth.

No matter how much expertise or unbelievable luck those old soldiers had, the biological central system they created worked perfectly even after years of being shelved and gathering dust.

This system's computational power was even slightly higher than that of a typical electronic system, and replacing it had no adverse effect on the Starship's operations.

"The only concern is the potential instability of this system."

Though the system, composed of the brains of those old soldiers, bestowed a certain brilliance of ingenuity, human brains inherently carried the risk of emotional turbulence, which could affect computational power and judgment.

Beyond its initial debut and basic diagnostics, this entire system had never undergone long-term practical operation.

To Helen, as a scientist, its lack of a trial by time signified a certain level of risk in its use.

"As long as it works, that's enough."

At a time when this solution was the only option, a little risk couldn't deter Bai E's thirst for exploration.

"Let's activate it and try it out."

It was an apt moment to also test whether Bai E's newly acquired high-dimensional space teleportation ability could handle the entire Starship.

...

On the familiar plain, Bai E led Helen and Feng Ling, among others, aboard the Starship.

To adapt it to the brand-new central control system, the Starship had undergone significant modifications, contrasting with its previously mechanical and steel-heavy appearance.

The semi-biological, semi-mechanical cables twitched faintly like living organisms, while various indicators throughout the Starship pulsed like slow, rhythmic breaths.

Scattered surveillance cameras seemed to have noticed Bai E's party's entry, and an unsettling sense of being watched crept up their spines.

The old-soldiers' brains, still retaining traces of human consciousness, were curiously observing these sudden intruders.

Upon entering the control room, their eyes were first drawn to the concentric rings of soldier heads slowly rotating, interconnected by countless cables.

The various faces of old soldier heads were fixed along the outer edges of several metal rings, uniformly stacked around a cylindrical structure at the center, rotating slowly.

The cables extending throughout the Starship originated from this cylindrical core at the heart of the system.

Though the cameras scattered throughout the Starship showed signs of observing Bai E's group, the individual soldier heads comprising the biological main brain system displayed no notable reaction to their arrival.

The slack-jawed, wide-eyed but expressionless soldier heads had distinct human features yet radiated an eerie lifelessness.

This contrast between signs of life and death cast an unsettlingly bizarre atmosphere over the entire control room.

Chapter 859 Test Flight_2

The Fengling's first encounter with this kind of setting clearly made her feel somewhat uncomfortable, as she frowned slightly.

Yet, since this was humanity's own matter, and these human heads in front of her had, out of a sense of devotion, willingly chosen this fate, she refrained from saying anything further.

For someone like her, with profound mastery of Spiritual Energy, discerning the emotional undertones within these beings' spiritual essence was merely a basic sensory ability.

Helen's gaze swept over the faces of these cyborg veterans. No matter how many times she looked, a hint of respect would always flicker in her eyes.

Only then did she turn to Bai E and say, "I've already activated the Starship; we're ready for the test flight anytime."

Transmitting a single person or a small squad through High-dimensional Space Teleportation certainly didn't require a special environment. However, opening a "passage" large enough for a massive entity like a Starship was far too risky to attempt on a planet's surface.

Whether it was the inherent "malice" of high-dimensional space or the accidental falling in of planetary elements—either would spell trouble.

They planned to conduct the experiment above the planet's atmosphere. As for the teleportation's endpoint, two Storm Warriors piloting mechas were already stationed early on a distant planetary satellite.

"Ready?"

"No problem."

After Bai E gave his affirmative response, Helen connected with the control tower through the Starship's communication system. Then, turning to Bai E, she nodded and said, "The route is clear; permission to proceed."

"Ignite thrusters."

"3..."

"2..."

"1..."

"Initiate!"

As the giant vessel trembled slightly, the colossal Starship, now restored and revitalized, once again lifted off from the earth.

The anti-gravity engines, while raising the Starship itself gently into the sky, also carried with it some scattered sand and stones.

Yet, as the Starship ascended higher, those dispersed grains of rubble eventually fell powerless from the heights, pattering onto the ground below.

This immense craft's takeoff was bound to attract the attention of various spies in the vicinity.

Whether it was the cities of the native inhabitants or the communities of players, both gleaned significant information from this event—

The one in Blackwater City, despite a failed voyage prior, still hadn't given up on exploring the cosmos.

However the native cities chose to interpret this, it was irrelevant.

Their will had never been able to influence this heroic figure who had delivered humanity from the darkest, most chaotic era.

As for the players, they felt genuine excitement.

The information returned by the players who had ventured solo during the first exploration clearly confirmed that a bustling human civilization still existed in this game world's outer universe.

Knowing this, these players could hardly content themselves with just wandering around the planet anymore.

Many players who had disregarded the first exploration now began gearing up enthusiastically, trying to secure tickets for the second extraterrestrial venture.

Even if they couldn't obtain tickets for the second expedition, they could prepare for the third or fourth.

Once a journey revealed that other civilized human planets existed in this universe, humans would inevitably embark on a ceaseless cycle of exploration.

No matter how the various observing groups interpreted things, the Starship soared straight into the skies before all who were watching, finally breaking through into the outer layers of space.

Staring into the pitch-black cosmic deep void, surrounded by the distant stars emitting light from unknown numbers of light-years away, Bai E held his breath and began employing the technique for High-dimensional Space Teleportation.

As his Spiritual Energy bridged the world, the barrier between high-dimensional space and material space was momentarily broken.

A ripple-like zone of fluctuating cosmic space silently emerged right ahead of the Starship.

Helen, slightly tense, pushed forward the throttle, and the hovering Starship began to inch forward.

Camera drones sent out in advance faithfully recorded the Starship's entire process of entering the high-dimensional space corridor.

The instant the ship's bow touched that turbulent zone, it vanished as if erased by a rubber eraser—the front section disappeared upon entry.

As the Starship continued forward, with over half its body gradually engulfed by the region, the remaining sections began to blur and flicker.

Finally, in an instant, the screens displaying live broadcasts from the viewing cameras turned completely black.

That marked the full transition of the Starship into high-dimensional space, severing contact with the cameras that remained in material space.

"Buzz~"

In this space of silent void, only the low hum of the Starship's operations echoed faintly.

Watching the Starship navigate forward in the pitch-black expanse, Helen gazed around with a curious sparkle in her eyes.

Unlike the strictly deterministic rules of the material world, everything here was filled with variables.

Even the definitions of time and space became blurred in this realm.

Its existence was a direct subversion of all the scientific foundations humans had built.

This was high-dimensional space.

The mysterious domain every human scientist had dreamed of challenging and studying during their lifetime.

Many scientists spent the final moments of their lives intertwined with this enigmatic field, gradually approaching the inevitable fate of death.

This was the towering mountain in every scientist's heart, and also their ultimate aspiration.

Helen was no exception.

But she also understood the heavy burden she carried on her shoulders.

Until humanity had been completely led out of the dark and chaotic epoch towards a brighter future, she would never permit herself to devote her energy to such an unproductive endeavor.

Thus, her curiosity for the moment... remained just curiosity.

In high-dimensional space, time held no meaning, nor any tangible definition.

The only presence was the perception of transformation.

No one knew how long they had been navigating inside, but only when Bai E used the Spiritual Energy beacon left by the two Storm Warriors stationed on the satellite to locate the satellite's high-dimensional space projection and performed the detachment protocol to return to material space did they finally learn the duration of their journey in objective material terms—

12 seconds.

"Inside planetary limits, the spatial distance and travel time in high-dimensional space are difficult to describe with simple functional relationships. For example, covering a physical distance of 1,000 meters might require 10 minutes of material time in high-dimensional space; while traversing 50 kilometers might take merely two and a half minutes. But when those distances extend to astronomical units at a universal scale, the material-world distance generally correlates positively with the travel time in high-dimensional space."

12 seconds—from the planet to the satellite—was a feat their Starship's original warp-drive technology could never hope to accomplish.

But now, using high-dimensional space for traversal, they had achieved this miraculous leap across time and space!

"We succeeded!" Helen, who was in charge of data recording throughout the test, beamed with delight.

The teleportation process had been utterly seamless. The Starship's self-diagnostic system reported no faults, and the departure and destination coordinates were impeccably accurate. This attempt was undoubtedly a flawless success!

"If you still have the stamina, shall we try again a few more times?"

After all, any experiment required extensive repetition and validation to ensure the accuracy of its final conclusions.

Helen gazed at Bai E expectantly.

"Let me give it a shot," Fengling chimed in with a smile from the side. "After all, according to the plan, it's my responsibility to guide the Starship through high-dimensional space for long distances to locate beacons."

"That works," Helen nodded, her eyes brimming with anticipation as she looked at Fengling. "Then we'll bother the Prophet for this."

Fengling shook her head with a gentle laugh. "No need for thanks. Your endeavors are aligned with our aspirations. After all, we originally came from the cosmos. We, elves... wish to trace our origins too."

Chapter 860 Star Sea Lantern

The news of the starship's upcoming flight spread widely among the players. Kuang Xin and the others, who were planning to meet Bai E, were among the first to hear about it.

Knowing that Master Bai E hadn't abandoned the plan to explore the Star Sea, they were undoubtedly the happiest ones.

Thus, whenever players encountered other intelligent lifeforms in the deep reaches of space, they knew they should promptly inform the master—after all, it might actually help him in some way.

Freshly returned from testing the new starship beyond the atmosphere, Bai E soon heard reports that those "Sons of Demons" he was most familiar with were waiting for his attention.

'They usually wouldn't seek me out unless there's something they deem valuable—either crucial information or a worthwhile item they want to present,' Bai E thought.

Nodding slightly, Bai E responded to his assistant, "Bring them in."

...

In the reception hall of Bai E's exclusive City Lord Manor, Bai E once again met the squad members who had been sticking together since the game's very beginning.

For a player to build their "little family" within the game, it's always a truly joyful thing.

The fact that these players had managed to continue their companionship for so long—perhaps that was their greatest achievement in the game.

Seeing them triggered long-cherished memories in Bai E—memories of friends he had known and bonded with during earlier days in the game. Even though he could barely recall their names or personalities today, the happiness they had shared always remained etched in his heart.

"What's the news?" Bai E asked with a smile.

Kuang Xin immediately leapt forward with excitement, "Master, we found aliens!"

That succinct statement instantly ignited the suspense Bai E had long been carrying in his heart.

"Aliens?" Bai E questioned.

Though the indigenous inhabitants of the game world had mostly reached a consensus that beings like the "Sons of Demons" or "Renegades" held unexpected channels for communication, none but Bai E, who truly understood the players' identities, knew how incredibly useful their forums could be in the real world.

The players' eyes and ears were infinitely connected and shared.

That Kuang Xin and the others came rushing to him meant that this information had indeed been verified.

After all, these players had consistently proven their reliability to Bai E over time.

"That's right! Aliens!" Kuang Xin's face was full of enthusiasm. "Our companions uncovered significant information about them. Upon learning this, the first thing we thought of was that you, Master, might need this intel the most."

Companions?

No doubt referring to those players who ventured out using small escape pods during the starship's return journey.

The intention behind letting them roam freely was precisely to test whether the players' luck and resilience could uncover surprises in the universe.

And now, it seemed they had indeed found something remarkable.

Bai E felt invigorated inside, his expression openly encouraging as he asked, "Tell me, what are these aliens like?"

"We don't yet know their internal structure, but at least from appearance, they look very similar to us. Height, physique, and even racial traits are almost indistinguishable. Only humans who evolved under unique planetary conditions show distinct characteristics tied to their environments. But in general, it seems like we all might trace back to a shared ancestor across different branches," Kuang Xin explained.

Dai Lian stepped forward as well, elaborating on all the details they had deliberately gathered, including the players' own reliable conjectures: "Moreover, their social structures function in a way akin to nation-to-nation diplomacy. Broadly peaceful in scope, with pockets of conflict at smaller scales. However, based on the limited information our companions have obtained so far, we still can't determine how they'll react to encountering civilizations like ours—a planet new to interstellar exploration."

Those players who had ventured out were far from reckless. Before fully understanding the cosmic situation, none were foolish enough to outright reveal their origin as being from a relatively secluded planet that had just stepped into the age of widespread interstellar navigation.

More information would require time, or potentially larger fleets to perform in-depth exploration.

Nodding in thought, Bai E asked with anticipation, "Do your companions have any idea where they are located within their Star Domain? If they do, perhaps on our next voyage we could set course directly for their region."

The currently planned Star Domain target showed only traces of possible human alteration—how could that compare to the firsthand intel provided by the players as guides?

"Well..." Dai Lian hesitated for a moment, slightly embarrassed, "We'll still have to dig into that and investigate further."

Astronomical navigation wasn't exactly the players' strong suit.

They'd likely need to scour online forums, searching for expert guidance capable of pinpointing directions within the game's starlit cosmos based on the information the players provided.

"I'll leave that to you, then," Bai E said, pursing his lips briefly before adding, "And if you can find companions willing to contribute a Spiritual Energy Beacon, that would be even better."

With these thoughts in mind, Bai E immediately began drafting a mission on the spot—

[Commission description automatically generating...]

[Side Mission—Star Sea's Light (Resource-Based Commission): On humanity's path to exploring the Star Sea, an insurmountable obstacle has emerged. To overcome this challenge, we must deploy some forerunners to establish guiding beacons far ahead at the target points. Only the shining wisdom of higher-dimensional brilliance can serve as the sole flame to lead humanity onward! (Note: This mission is valid only for the first completion. Subsequent completions by others will not yield rewards.)]